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SQ. BOMB-379-HI
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379 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

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SQ-BOMB-379-HI
June, 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

379th Bombardment Squadron (M)
310th Bombardment Group (M), AAF.

1 July 1943

P.R.C.

SUBJECT: Squadron History for June.

TO : Headquarters, 310th Bombardment Group (M), AAF, APO-520.

Seventeen (17) missions were successfully completed for the month of June. Planes of the 379th Squadron having participated in twelve (12) of the seventeen (17) missions. Targets such as shipping in Olbia Harbor, Sardinia; coastal gun positions, shipping and dock installations on Pantelleria Island; shipping and dock installations at Lampedusa Isle; Sciacca A/D in Sicily and Railroad Trestle and junction at Salerno, Italy felt the destruction of our bombs.

On June 1st, eighteen (18) of our planes were dispatched to cover any shipping in Olbia Harbor, Sardinia. Three large M/V's were sighted at the target with the result of two of the M/V's receiving direct hits and left burning and the third suffering several near misses. However the mission was not completed without stiff opposition from the enemy. Intense accurate heavy flak and fighters were encountered over the target with the result of two B-25's being forced down by the enemy fighters and four others badly damaged by flak. Lt. C. W. Smith, of our squadron, was forced to crash land in the water near Phillipsville (see attached story) and Capt. W. T. Alexander, of the luckless 381st, was forced to crash land at Bone. Inspite of this stiff opposition, sixteen (16) of our bombers returned safely to the base and word was received that Capt. Alexander's and Lt. Smith's crews were safe, others that, for a few flesh wounds and bruises.

379th Pilots:

Capts. R. M. Hamilton
K. M. Johnson
J. R. Holstead
Lts. H. E. Rogers
H. R. Logan, Jr.
S. C. Schlitzkus
R. C. Blosel
J. D. Lindh
C. W. Smith
D. S. Wall
L. Lesonik

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On June 2nd Lt. Earl W. Fisher was tranferred from our Squadron and reassigned to Group Headquarters and appointed Group Special Service Officer.

On the 3rd of June, 18 B-25's led by 1st Lt. Marsh resumed the pounding of Pantelleria. This was Lieut. Marsh's first mission as flight leader, a polite gesture to the old timer for his last mission assignment in his tour of operations. The confidence was not ill bestowed as the targets, Gun Positions #1 and #4 were covered with numerous direct hits and several fires were kindled in these areas.

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Gun Position #3 was probably hit too. Upon leaving the target a large explosion was seen and it is believed to have been caused by the dive bombers work on the gun encasements.

No enemy aircraft were engaged. Heavy flak of slight to moderate intensity was experienced over the target. Typically Italian, it was inaccurate both as to range and deflection. All planes returned safely. 379th did not participate in this operation.

The next day, the 4th of June, Gun Position #6 and #7 on the southwestern shoreof the unhappy isle was the target for 18 B-25's. No direct hits were made on either gun positions. One string fell on east side of road just southwest of #6 position and one string fell short, another over, and another to the east of gun position #7.

No enemy aircraft were engaged. Again slight to moderate heavy inaccurate flak affoeded ineffective opposition. An innocuos mission from both axis and allied points of view. 379th had no planes on this mission.

On June 4th Lt. W. D. Hartley, Squadron Adjutant, and seven (7) E.M. left for Kings Cross on an advanced detail to help prepare our new field.

The June 5th effort was directed toward the previous days target. Eighteen (18) Bakers 25's dropped some bombs short, some bombs through and some bombs over gun position #6. Gun Position #7 seemed to be well covered. The western most gun of this battery seemed to have suffered a direct hit but accurate observation was hindered by the dust and smoke of the bomb hits.

As the bombers left the target the mich feared surprise interception caught caught our bombers formation with their bomber escort miles ahead. Fifteen to twenty ME 109's and FW 190's were awaiting the formation on the deck. If these unorthodox tactic were designed to hide their precense from the P-38's the ruse was successful. They made their attacks from 6 o'clock, alternating from 6 o'clock and pssing from slightly above and slightly below the formation depending on which phase of their lazy eights they happened to be when the bombers crossed their sights. Lt. Schlitzkus's ship made a controlled landing at 36 deg. 45 Min. N and 11 deg. 30 Min. E. After leaving the plane the survivors were strafed by one ME 109 until the bastard expended all of his ammunition (see attached story for further details.) Cpl. J. S. Kovar, Bombardier was lost. The other members of the crew were Lt. R. C. Werner C. P.. S/Sgt. R. E. Teeple R/O., and Sgt. L.W. Edwards A/G. Another B-25 made an emergency landing at Crombalia L/G. Three (3) ME 109's and one (1) FW 190 were written off, and another ME 109 has a questionable existence and another one was definitely damaged. Slight to moderate heavy inaccurate flak came from the target and harbor areas. S/Sgt. Rudy Sekermestrovich of our squadron shot down the F/W 190 and S/Sgt. Phillip E. Posey accounted for one of the M/E 109's,and S/Sgt. Albert F. Dallaire claimed a probable.

379th Pilots:

Capts. E. E. Batten
J. R. Holstead
K. M. Johnson
Lts. H. L. Rogers
B. J. Leask
W. E. Wilvert
Lts. J. D. Lindh
S. C. Schlitzkus
H. R. Logan Jr.
L. Lesonik
F/O's. D. S. Wall
R. C. Blosel.

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On June 5th Capt. R. M. Hamilton, T/Sgt. Marple, and S/Sgt. Pagano left for P.O.E. Their trip home was well deserved and hard earned. We shall miss them. Capt. Hamilton, piloted the plane that was so badly riddles on the April 7th Sea search. All members of the crew and "Ham" had the dubious distinction of being the pilot of the most hit plane in the squadron until Lt. Bert Leask accumulated his unfortunate record.

Pagano and Marple had been members of Capt. Allen's crew, hance they saw the first operation in which the unit was engaged. Filling the shoes of these men is going to be a real man sized job. Good luck to them.

On the 5th of June the following named officers and enlisted men were assigned and joined to our squadron:

1st Lt.	Royal B. Allison.	S/Sgt.	Clifton L. Brown
2nd Lt.	Ray F. Fletcher	S/Sgt.	James R. Grimm
2nd Lt.	Thomas F. Conway	S/Sgt.	F. W. Walpole
2nd Lt.	Arthur H. Topham	Sgt.	Edward T. Joseph.
2nd Lt.	Arvid A. Pamp	S/Sgt.	C. A. Campbell
2nd Lt.	Walter J. Rath	Sgt.	J. E. Shields.

On the 6th of June the bulk of our unit moved to Kings Cross by air and motor transport. Our first view of our new home was hardly encouraging.

The first operation out of Kings Cross differed from any of the unit had been assigned before. Three planes, of the 428th Squadron dropped 100,000 surrender pamphlets on Pantelleria the morning of June 8th. Very slight inaccurate flak formed the only opposition. Already Allied Naval Forces, of some fifteen (15) units were observed just off the NW point of the target.

On the afternoon of the 8th, eighteen (18) B-25's bombed Gun Positions #5, 6, and 7. The first flight walked its bombs across the center of gun position #5. It is believed that guns in this area received direct hits. Gun Position #6 and #7 were also straddled. Slight inaccurate heavy flak again afforded feeble and ineffective opposition. This was a day of rest for the 379th.

The next target of the ceaseless pounding of Pantelleria was gun position #11. The NE, N, W, and Eastern corners of the target area were particularly hard hit. A large explosion accompanied by the bright red fire and much smoke was observed in that target area. The shock effected the formation at 10,000 ft. The same old story, very light flak, inaccurate, heavy flak. The formation of 36 B-25's had for is flight commander, Col Hunter. The date was June 9th.

379th Pilots:

Capts.	K. M. Johnson	Lts.	J. D. Lindh
	J. R.Holstead		B. J. Leask
Lts.	H. L Rogers		W. E. Wilvert
	H. R. Logan		R. V. Liljegren
	C. W. Smith	F/O's.	D. S. Wall
	L. Lesonik		R. C. Blosel

June 10th marked a new high in the number of planes in the group sent on one mission. 126,000 lbs. of bombs was destined for a single gun position, oft hit #1. The area was completely devastated, two building used for pin pointing the target were demolished. The North end of the island was being softened for imminent invasion.

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Slight heavy flak, good range and poor deflection was experienced over the target, coming pretty largely from a position North of the A/D. Just for variety, 12 S/E fighters, 3 transports, were observed on the A/D.

379th Pilots:

Capt. J. R. Holstead
Lts. J. D. Lindh
C. W. Smith
W. E. Wilvert
R. V. Liljegren
L. Lesonik
F/O's. R. C. Blosel

The 310th surpassed its own record, of one days standing with a 48 plane effort on three targets within close range approximity. The first flight laid its bombs right across the assigned section of the S/W coast road. A large half moom ammunition dump NE. of the road was seen to blow up. Debris and smoke were scattered high as 5000 feet. The second flight completely covered the southern dispersal area of the A/D/ one transport receiving a direct hit. Fires and an explosion were observed in the barracks area. Just for a good measure, a string of fragmentation bombs fell directly through the gun positions there and silenced them. Strings of bombs from the third flight started in the center of the A/D and went through the S/E dispersal area. The target of the last flight was section of open road along the NW shore of the island. Fires were observed in this area. No E/A were engaged and the one flak position firing was effectively silenced. Just as the bombers left the target the island's surrender was reported by radio. It was brilliant job well done, proof of what well directed air power will do.

379th Pilots:

Capts. J. R. Holstead
K. M. Johnson
Lts. J. D. Lindh
H. L. Rogers
E. A. Ruppelt
H. R. Logan
R. B. Allison
B. J. Leask
W. E. Wilvert
R. V. Liljegren
F/O's. R. C. Blosel
F. H. Eaton

The next goal in the strategic design was the capture of Lamedusa, an even more diminutive Axis Isle of the coast Of Sousse. The morning of the 12th 24 B-25's hit the town of Lampedusa itself. Bombs started near the waters edge and walked NE into the southern part of the town and harbor area. Buildings were demolished and columns of smoke observed. At least a third of the town was devastated. The peninsula to the south of the town was completely covered by bombs, the barracks suffered direct hits and gun positions emminating from a point near the empty airfield.

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379th Pilots:

Capts.	J. R. Holstead	Lts.	R. V. Liljegren
	K. M. Johnson		W. E. Wilvert
Lts.	J. D. Lindh		L. Lesonik
	C. W. Smith	F/O's.	R. C. Blosel
	R. B. Allison		D. S. Wall
	B. J. Leask		

The Afternoon of the same day another formation of 24 bombers covered the entire town with the exception of the SE. extremity. Wharehouses, NW of the town next to the shore, received several direct hits. The barracks area and adjacent gun positions to the south of the town were hit again. Some bombs were seen to fall among 7 or 8 small craft in the NNE Section of the harbor. It took just one day to cause Lampedusa to surrneder. No flak reported on this mission. The 379th effort was confined to the morning mission.

After a three day rest 36 planes took off for Sicily the target the A/D at Sciacca and ran into more hell than in all the Pantellerai raids combined. Moderate to intense heavy flak, accurate at range and very little off in deflection was reported at the target. Some reported it concentrated enough to warrant its classification as barrage type. 20 to 25 enemy aircraft, consisting of ME 109's and FW 190's attacked the formation before and over the target. Generally they came in pairs from 5 to 7 o'clock and just below with other pairs serving as decoys just out of range to one side and a bit ahead. There seems to be some grounds for the belief that aerial bombs were aimed at the formation. 5 Me 109's and 1 FW 190 were detroyed and another ME 109 has a questionable existence.

Approximately 50 aircraft were seen on the target. At least two thirds of our bombs hit in the SW side and in olive groves south of the field. The western area was well covered and hits were observed among the buildings causing a cloumn of smoke to rise. A number of hits were observed among aircraft in both dispersal areas.

379th Pilots:

Capts.	J. R. Holstead
	K. M. Johnson
Lts.	J. D. Lindh
	C. W. Smith
	H. R. Logan
	R. B. Allison
	L. Lesonik
	B. J. Leask
	R. V. Liljegren
	W. E. Wilvert
F/O's.	R. C. Blosel
	D. S. Wall

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June the 18th will stand out in the history of the 310th as one of the most remarkable raids in her career and one of the most successful of any medium bomb group. Thirty six (36) planes took off for the Port of Golfo Aranci, in NE Sardinia, at 0745. Two merchant vessels were moored on either side of the end of the pier. Both received many direct hits and one was definitely known to be sinking and the other was left burning. The end of the jettie, between the two ships, was all obliterated. A large merchant vessel west of the pier was straddled with many near misses and two direct hits. The land at the neck of the jettie was covered by a concentration of hits that tore up the railroad tracks and destroyed many buildings. Photo interpretation revealed an almost unbelieveable accuracy of the concentration patterns. 40 to 50 enemy aircraft, consisting of ME 109's and FW 190's, and MA 200's were contacted at the target. Approximately half the total attacked the formation from the front and rear quarters, above and below. The passes were made in two's and four's with the use of an occasional decoy to one side. One crew reported two fighters were three thousnad feet above the fromation, dropping aerial bombs.

Not one bomber was lost while seven enemy fighters were detroyed and another probably detroyed by our formation. The escort, of P-38's lost one but destroyed sixteen enemy fighters. It is extremely doubtful whether any medium bomber formation has ever been intercepted by a greater enemy force. The extreme success of the raid in the face of this opposition, is strictly Horatio Alger stuff.

Slight to moderate heavy accurate flak was experienced over the target. Moderate to intense heavy flak, of good range and poor deflection, was emitted from Olbia Harbor. Intense heavy flak, out of range came from a destroyer or cruiser at 39 deg. 15 min. N, and 10 deg. 9 min. E.

Commendations came fast and furiously.

It was a pity that the 379th had to miss this one, but it was our day to spare.

On the 20th of June the following named officer and enlisted men were assigned and joined to our squadron:

1st Lt.	William J. Snyder
1st Lt.	Albert K. Oechsle
1st Lt.	John G. Persson
2nd Lt.	Joseph J. Brady
T/Sgt.	Clyne L. Johnston
S/Sgt.	Arthur L. Barny
S/Sgt.	Brice C. Davis
S/Sgt.	Dino Butori
S/Sgt.	Roy L. Coleman
S/Sgt.	Edwin D. Axelson
S/Sgt.	Albert R. Hill

The marshalling yards and railroad trestle at Salerno was the units first raid on the continent proper. On June 21st, 36 B-25's led by Capt. Johnson dropped three types of bombs on the target just south of Naples. The target was exceptionally important in that these rail installations are the bottleneck through which all freight moving into the boot and hence to Sicily must pass. The trestle received many direct hits on both the east and west ends. Industrial buildings and railroads spur SE of the trestle were well covered. The southern tip of the marshalling yard, north of the trestle, was also hit and the marshalling yard and rolling stock to the west of the trestle was inundated by hits. A building just north of this target suffered a direct hit.

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No fighters were seen and no flak at target. Naples, belched an amount intense enough to fit in the barrage category. Two B-25's made emergency landings at friendly airdrome but these were due to gas shortages.

379th Pilots:

Cpts.	K. M. Johnson
	J. R. Holstead
Lts.	H. R. Logan
	R. B. Allison
	J. D. Lindh
	B. J. Leask
	R. V. Liljegren
	W. E. Wilvert
F/O's	F. H. Eaton
	R. C. Blosel

June 24th we visited Gulfo Aranci again to hit both shipping and strategic shore installations. Eighteen (18) of the bombers hit the harbor scoring hits directly on one vessel causing a substantial fire and missing the other. Strings of bombs fell across the jettie. The other 18 covered some shore installations. However, the W/T station, the special target, was missed due to cloud interference and dense smoke from the town caused by a previous formation.

No enemy aircraft were engaged and slight inaccurate heavy flak was no deterent. The importance ofGulfo Aranci and Olbia seems to have come to an end even in the eyes of the axis. What a difference in just six days since the last visit.

379th Pilots:

Capt.	K. M. JOhnson	Lts.	B. J. Leask
Lts.	J. D. Lindh		W. E. Wilvert
	L. Lesonik		R. V. Liljegren
	H. R. Logan	F/O's	D. P. Wall
	J. L. Carpenter		F. H. Eaton
	W. J. Schnieder		R. C. Blosel

On the 27th of June Lt. I. E. Grant, Capt. "Hams" old co-pilot, received orders to report to Algers. He shared with "Ham" a mighty rough tour. We wish we could be with him.

The next target was Olbia Venafioita A/D. Apperantely it was designed to further cripple the defensive capabilities of NE Sardinia. Thirty six (36) planes covered the entire target with frags. Hangers in the SE corner were left burning. Fifteen)15) to eighteen (18) large aircraft in this area are believed to have been damaged or destroyed. One large fire was observed on the E side of the airdrome near road intersection, another fire was started in NW corner and a third fire was seen on the S central side of the airdrome. One enemy aircraft in the NW corner received a direct hit while attempting to take off, crashing into a second plane and destroying both.

Five (5) to eight (8) enemy aircraft observed over the target but did not attack. Slight to moderate inaccurate flak came from gun positions at the target. A small amount from Olbia Harbor.

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379th Pilots:

Capt. K. M. Johnson
Lts. R. B. Allison
H. L. Rogers
R. L. Harrop
E. A. Ruppelt
H. R. Logan
J. L. Carpenter
W. J. Schnieder
F/O's. D. S. Wall
F. H. Eaton
R. C. Blosel

The month's end was climaxes by a raid on Sciacca A/D. Thirty six (36) Baker 25's dropped 300 pounders covering the entire landing area. The runway was particularly hard hit. Flak positions in building just SW of the landing area were hit. Fires were observed here.

Moderate to intense heavy accurate flak was encountered over target. Some was encountered at C. San Marco. Four (4) to six (6) ME 109's were attacking the last element of the formation on leaving the target. One ME 109 was probably destroyed. All our aircraft safely with little but minor damage returned to the home base.

379th Pilots:

Lt. L. Lesonik
F/O's.. R. C. Blosel
F. H. Eaton.

EDWARD P. MEEHAN
1st Lt., Air Corps
Ass't Sq. S-2.

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